

## **“Effect of Using Blended Learning in Teaching Reading Comprehension: An Analytical Literature Review”**

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## Abstract:

Objective Reading comprehension is one of the most important skills for learning the English language, as some recent studies indicate that about 70% of what a person learns comes to him through reading. Reading plays a vital role in forming the humanistic attitudes towards shaping new ideas. Therefore, this research paper focuses and discusses blended learning, as an effective method to teach and improve the reading comprehension skill.

**Methods** The literature included in this review obtained by searching a variety of library databases for the years 2012-2021. The databases included Saudi Digital Library, Google Scholar, ERIC and ProQuest. The key terms used in the search were 'blended learning', 'reading

skill', 'reading comprehension' and 'blended learning in the reading classes.'

**Results** the 30 studies reviewed in this article indicate that blended learning in teaching reading comprehension have several benefits: providing ease of use, improving reading efficiency, enhancing learners' motivation, self-confidence, responsibility, flexibility, and diversity of resources, enhancing reading comprehension, reading speed and vocabulary mastery, encouraging students' critical thinking, making the lessons enjoyable, developing the communicative skills, providing individual practice and supportive benefits for students from low-SES backgrounds.

**Conclusions** this review provides ideas for EFL teachers on the use of BL in teaching Reading comprehension skill, and explain benefits of improving reading comprehension skill.

## Introduction

Reading is one of the most important skills, it is a source of obtaining knowledge, and information and acquiring other language skills. According to (Chastain, 1988) Reading materials have been considered as one of the primary sources of acquiring comprehensible input, and therefore reading has always been a significant aspect of language learning. Reading leads to better writing, understanding, and the ability to acquire the English language. However, the teaching of reading skills can pose significant challenges for educators over a range of different educational levels( Yudhana, 2021).

Consequently, empowering students to better deal with their language learning can overcome that difficult instance, and it is therefore of vital importance that teachers know how to achieve this goal such as by setting objectives and learning tasks that shift the focus from the teacher to the student and utilizing the appropriate technology.

Using technology in education has a clear impact on the development of the educational system, as it helps to raise the level of awareness among students, enhance their skills and achievements, and create an advanced and more interactive learning environment than the use of traditional activities. One of the most important achievements of educational technology is e-learning, which has proven its effectiveness in developing the educational process, and one of the most preferable approaches to instruction is to incorporate technology inside classrooms by applying "Blended learning " which combines face-to-face instruction with online learning (Shehatah,2019).

Blended learning has found great interest from language teachers, and studies have proven its great effectiveness in teaching English language skills, especially reading skills. Therefore, this article will review the current research on blended learning as an effective approach to teaching and improving reading comprehension for (EFL) students.

Before proceeding to the analysis of literature on blended learning in teaching reading comprehension it is helpful to review the definitions of blended learning and reading comprehension.

## Definitions

### 1. Reading Comprehension

According to the Research and Development **RAND** Reading Study Group (2002), comprehension is the process of eliciting and making meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. Van den Broek & Espin (2012) define reading comprehension as a complex interaction among automatic and strategic cognitive processes that enables the reader to create a mental representation of the text.

**1. Blended Learning** is an approach to education that is defined as the combination of traditional face-to-face instruction with computer-assisted instruction (Bonk and Graham, 2012). The North American Council for Online Learning (NACOL) (2008) describes blended learning: blended learning is the natural growth of e-learning to a comprehensive program of numerous multimedia and using it in a perfect method to solve problems. It combines and uses both types of teaching that are traditional classroom lectures and online learning in the teaching and learning process.

Figure 1 illustrates the blended learning environment as it relates to traditional (face-to-face) and online learning.

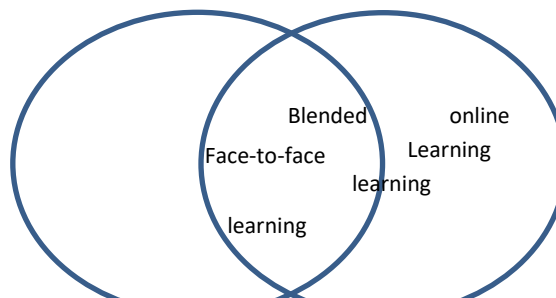


Figure1. blended learning environment

## Objectives

This article focuses on and discusses blended learning, as an effective method to teach and improve reading comprehension skills, and explains its positive effects and benefits.

## Theoretical framework

### Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a process that involves the orchestration of the readers' prior knowledge about the world and language. It involves many activities such as predicting, questioning, summarizing, determining the meaning of vocabulary in context, monitoring one's comprehension, and reflecting (Weaver, 1994) (as cited in Antony, 2010). It is a way of thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning, and problem-solving, (Okasha, 2004). As one of the language skills, comprehension of written texts, or reading comprehension skills, form the stepping stone for the education of a learner. The main concept in reading skills is 'comprehension'. It is highly valued by students and teachers alike since it enhances the process of language acquisition and helps students to read for different purposes (Behjat et al, 2012).

### The importance of reading comprehension skills

Reading comprehension is important for several reasons and can provide many benefits. Being able to read effectively can improve both personal and professional levels and can increase the overall enjoyment of reading. Knowing how to understand a text can help boost knowledge in certain areas and help in learning new skills and information faster. Additional benefits of good reading comprehension skills include: Being able to understand, analyze, and respond to documents, improved ability to write clearly and effectively, and better enjoyment of and motivation to read.

However, teachers face difficulty in teaching and measuring reading comprehension. Unfortunately, the educators spent a great amount of time testing comprehension by asking questions at the end of each reading part before reinforcing the reading comprehension of students (Kheirzadeh & Birgani, 2018).

The studies included in this article presented the benefits and positive impact of blended learning as a strategy that facilitates the process of teaching, developing, and evaluating reading comprehension.

## Blending learning

Blended learning was named one of the top ten emerging trends in the information industry by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD). The strength of blended learning methods lies in their ability to improve the student experience. Studies have shown that “blended learning” reduces failure rates, improves learning, and enhances participation. It combines the best practices of face-to-face and online education in ways that enable students to learn in their way. Bon (2011) and Jan & Han (2012) agreed that electronic blended education has proven its importance in meeting the educational needs of institutions, where the combination of traditional classrooms with web-based education and training or synchronous and asynchronous presentation via the Internet leads to improving the quality of education increasing experiences. According to Akkoyunlu and Soylu (2004), blended learning combines the strengths and limitations of online learning with the strengths and weaknesses of face-to-face learning.

## Method

This article used a systematic review of the current research on blended learning as an effective method to improve reading comprehension. The literature included in this review was obtained by searching a variety of library databases for the years 2012-2021. The databases included Saudi Digital Library (SDL), Google Scholar, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), and ProQuest. The key terms used in the search were ‘blended learning’, ‘reading skill’, and ‘blended learning in reading classroom’. Over 30 articles were found in this search.

The articles briefly describe the purpose and findings of the 30 articles selected for this review.

## Results

The studies included here examine the efficacy of blended learning in improving reading comprehension among EFL students, and also show the positive attitudes of students and teachers towards using blended learning in teaching reading comprehension skills. The study also reviews a list of the benefits of blended learning as a method to teach and improve reading comprehension skills.

## Benefits of blended learning

### 1. Improve reading efficiency

According to Al Roomy & Al Thewini (2019), Students reported that the extensive reading online program helped them to read more efficiently with maximum comprehension and work at their pace to develop their learning skills.

### 2. Enhancing learners' motivation, self-confidence, and responsibility

Alroomy & AlThwini (2019), Bouguebs (2020), and Khaleel (2016) found that extensive reading created a motivating environment for learning. Also, Abuqabita (2016) mentions that the use of blended learning led to the development of the use of self-questioning strategies, metacognitive organization of vocabulary, and goal setting. Lamri & Hamzaie (2018) conclude that blended learning raises students' motivation as they could have access to many activities in their free time, select the ones to deal with, have immediate feedback, and discuss their difficulties with their mates or their instructor.

### 3. Enhancing the four language learning skills

The findings from Banditvila (2016) and Junedi & Ranchman(2020) studies show that online practice is directly beneficial to enhancing the four language learning skills as well as autonomous learning and learner motivation.

### 4. Ease to access, flexibility, and diversity of resource

According to Bouguebs (2020), Lingga et al (2020), and Sun (2018) the utility of a blended learning environment in students' teaching is supported by a set of reasons such as the ease, flexibility, and convenience of online instruction. Rombot (2021) mentions that the availability of attractive digital reading texts can also increase student's interest in reading. Therefore, learning through blended learning can be an alternative to the problem of limited time and the amount of materials that must be learned.

### 5. Enhancing reading comprehension, reading speed, and vocabulary mastery

The results of Bataineh & Mayyas's (2017), Djiwandono's (2018), and Muhaimin's (2018) studies indicate that the use of blended learning has a positive impact on improving scanning, skimming, and overall reading comprehension and vocabulary mastery.

### 6. Encouraging students' critical thinking

Elahi (2020) and Rojabi (2019) mention that teachers can develop learners' critical thinking and metacognitive skills by designing interactive reading comprehension online tasks.

### 7. Conducting enjoyable lessons

According to Elahi (2020) and Paramata's (2015) studies blended learning makes the reading process enjoyable and exciting.

### 8. developing the communicative skills

Elahi (2020) and Khaleel (2016) mention that using blended learning encourages students to communicate with peers and develop their communicative skills.

### 9. Ability to provide individual practice

Kazakof et al (2018) reported that blended learning is able to provide individualized practice as well as scaffolded instructional steps when needed.

### 10. providing supportive benefits for students from low-SES backgrounds

Prescott et al (2017) and Schechter et al (2015) studies mention that a blended learning approach can provide supportive benefits for students from the low socio-economic status (low SES) backgrounds or students who were English Language Center (ELs), who historically fall behind their peers in reading development Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. A blended learning program can offer a seamless approach to differentiated instruction, identifying areas of skill deficiencies and providing targeted instruction and extended practice to overcome such deficiencies.

## Conclusions

This review provides ideas for EFL teachers on the use of BL in teaching Reading comprehension skills and explains its positive effects and benefits in improving reading comprehension skills.

## Implications

It is hoped that this study will contribute to current research in the field of public education and more specifically teaching reading comprehension with the application of blended learning. Also, the study suggests that the implementation of blended learning could considerably improve the reading comprehension skills of EFL students.

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### "أثر استخدام التعلم المدمج في تدريس فهم القراءة: مراجعة أدبية تحليلية"

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الهدف يعتبر فهم القراءة واحد من أهم المهارات لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، حيث تشير بعض الدراسات الحديثة إلى أن حوالي 70% مما يتعلمه الشخص يأتي من خلال القراءة. تلعب القراءة دوراً حيوياً في تشكيل المواقف الإنسانية نحو صياغة أفكار جديدة. لذلك، تركز هذه الورقة البحثية وتناقش التعلم المدمج، كطريقة فعالة لتعليم وتحسين مهارة فهم القراءة.

الطرق الأدبيات المضمنة في هذه المراجعة تم الحصول عليها من خلال البحث في مجموعة متنوعة من قواعد البيانات المكتبية للسنوات 2012-2021. شملت قواعد البيانات مكتبة رقمية سعودية، جوجل سكولار، إريك وبروكويست. كانت الكلمات الرئيسية المستخدمة في البحث هي "التعلم المدمج"، "مهارة القراءة"، "فهم القراءة" و"التعلم المدمج في دروس القراءة".

النتائج تشير الدراسات الثلاثين التي تمت مراجعتها في هذه المقالة إلى أن التعلم المدمج في تدريس فهم القراءة له عدة فوائد: توفير سهولة الاستخدام، تحسين كفاءة القراءة، تعزيز دافعية المتعلمين، الثقة بالنفس، المسؤولية، المرونة، وتنوع الموارد، تعزيز فهم القراءة، سرعة القراءة وإتقان المفردات، تشجيع التفكير النقدي لدى الطلاب، جعل الدروس ممتعة، تطوير المهارات التواصلية، توفير ممارسة فردية وفوائد داعمة للطلاب من خلفيات ذات دخل منخفض.